Rapid Spacecraft Development Office News

May 2000

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A Message from the Associate Chief of the RSDO

As usual, we have numerous items to report in this issue of our newsletter. We recently released an RFO for the National Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System (NPOESS) Preparatory Project (NPP), and have completed the first on-ramp for Rapid II. Also in this issue are a report of an effort undertaken by Glenn Research Center to examine the suitability of RSDO buses for use in IP-based satellites, and an article describing the vision for the future of our web site.

We also experienced a number of RSDO personnel changes in recent weeks. Effective May 5, 2000, RSDO Chief Jim Adams transferred to GSFC Code 740's Project Formulation Office. Jim was one of the founding members of the RSDO, and was the driving force behind many of the innovations and successes this organization has achieved. Good luck, Jim; you will be missed!In addition, Leif Grotos has departed RSDO for a position in private industry, and we are pleased to welcome Jerry Edmond, who will serve as our new contracts specialist. For a farewell note from Leif and an introduction to Jerry, please see the articles in the "CO's Corner." Finally, don't miss the "Awards and Honors" section describing some of the latest achievements of our staff.With these and other upcoming missions and studies in the works, we are sure to have a busy and productive summer season. As always, please feel free to contact me via email (bill.watson@gsfc.nasa.gov) or telephone (301.286.8881) if you have any comments or questions regarding RSDO business.

Bill Watson/Associate Chief of the RSDO

Contracting Officer's Corner

Small Disadvantaged Business Information

The RSDO strongly suggests that you consider employing the services of a small or disadvantaged business when you select your subcontractors. For more information on official policies and goals concerning the integration of these companies into the NASA business environment, please visit the web site of NASA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) at http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/codek/.

Leif Grotos Departs RSDO

Let me first say that I will truly miss working for NASA and especially the RSDO. When I look back on my ten-year career with NASA, some of my most memorable reflections will be of my eighteen months in the RSDO. I truly believe in NASA and the RSDO mission, so the decision to leave was not an easy one to make. I will be working for American Management System and am looking forward to new challenges and opportunities. I wish all the best to my co-workers and all the vendors.
Goodbye, Leif

Welcome, Jerry Edmond!

Jerry is a 1995 graduate of North Carolina Central University (NCCU) with a Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration. Upon graduation from NCCU he worked for the city of Durham, North Carolina as a Recruiter/Counselor for the Job Training Partnership Act Program. In 1997, Jerry began his career with the Federal Government as a Contract Specialist for the Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIRSYSCOM). He was employed in the Anti-Submarine Warfare Office, on a team developing the P-3 Orion, which is an Anti-Submarine Warfare Land Plane. After two years with NAVAIR, Jerry started at NASA GSFC in the Applied Engineering and Technology Directorate/Systems, Technology, and Advanced Concepts (AETD/STAAC) Procurement Office. While occupying this position, Jerry's responsibilities included awarding Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) contracts and administering Constellation-X contracts. Jerry is currently enrolled at the University of Maryland University College working on a Master of Science in Management. Jerry will be joining the RSDO on May 8, as a contracts specialist.

New Business

NPOESS Preparatory Project RFO Released

The National Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System (NPOESS) Preparatory Project (NPP) at GSFC recently released a Request for Offer for NPP Study #1. This study is the first of a planned series of studies to evaluate Rapid Spacecraft Acquisition possibilities for the NPP mission. NPP will fly three of the major instrument sensors planned for the joint agency (NASA, Department of Commerce, Department of Defense) NPOESS mission. The Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS) is a multi-channel, high spatial resolution sensor in the visible and infrared bands. It will measure land, sea, ice and cloud surface temperatures, moisture content, vegetation, and organic and particulate distributions. The Advanced Technology Microwave Sounder (ATMS) and Cross-track Infrared Sounder (CrIS) will work in conjunction to produce high-resolution profiles of atmospheric temperature and humidity distributions. Scheduled to launch in late 2005, NPP will provide data continuity for NASA's Earth Observation System (EOS) and early evaluation of sensor performance and science product generation for the NPOESS mission, prior to the operational NPOESS flights. The review of Study #1 results, in late summer 2000, is expected to result in improved definition of the technical and mission challenges to be expected by NPP, and will lay the groundwork for the more detailed spacecraft design efforts in 2001.

By Art Unger/NPP/GSFC Code 429

Living With a Star Program Underway

The Living With a Star (LWS) program recently approved by Congress consists of numerous missions, including several Solar Terrestrial Probes and a Space Weather Network. Together, these elements will further our understanding of space weather and the effects of the Sun on the Earth's climate. Planned Solar Terrestrial Probes include Solar-B, the Solar-Terrestrial Relations Observatory (STEREO), the Magnetospheric Multi Scale (MMS) mission, Geospace Electrodynamic Connections (GEC), and the Magnetospheric Constellation (MC) missions.

Four sets of missions will make up the Space Weather Network. The Solar Dynamics Observatory is a follow-on mission to the SOHO satellite, and will study the Sun's dynamics, including its interior, eruptions, flares, magnetic fields and radiation patterns. The Solar Sentinels are a series of satellites that will measure the ambient solar wind in the inner heliosphere, including that on the far side of the Sun. The Radiation Belt Mappers will help scientists gain an understanding of the origin and dynamics of the Sun's radiation belts, and the Ionospheric Mappers will provide insight as to how the ionosphere behaves as a system, linking solar energy with changes in the Earth's atmosphere.It is hoped that the RSDO will provide acquisition services for many of these upcoming missions. The first of the Solar Terrestrial Probes is scheduled for launch in 2004, with other probes and Space Weather Network elements to follow during the next several years. Watch future issues of this newsletter for an update concerning RSDO's role in this program. For additional information on this exciting initiative, please visit the LWS web site at http://stprobes.gsfc.nasa.gov/lws.htm.

IP-Based Satellite Study Examines RSA Buses

NASA's Glenn Research Center (GRC) is leading an accommodation study on behalf of the Space Operations Communication Technology Project (SOCTP), Earth Science Technology Office (ESTO), the Space Network program, and Cross Enterprise Technology Development Program (CETDP). GRC's objectives include the promotion and transfer of advanced communications satellite technology to the NASA Enterprises.NASA's Space Operations Management Office (SOMO) is working via this GRC initiative to explore the possibility of Internet Protocol (IP) based satellite communication. The vision is to allow the Principal Investigator in the lab to communicate with his instruments in space, as easily as he can communicate with his instruments on the ground today. This vision is consistent with the Earth Science Enterprise's long-term vision of a "sensor-web," with assets in space and on Earth. In areas such as space and Earth science, observers will be able to employ remote control over the Internet, conducting their

observations with sensors and telescopes a continent away.The IP-based satellite study is to investigate the commercial core bus architectures available under the Rapid Spacecraft Acquisition (RSA) program, and determine what changes would be required to fulfill the vision above. Specifically, the goal is to identify gaps in component technology that might be candidates for funding under the various NASA technology program initiatives and road maps.

By Bill Watson/Associate Chief of the RSDO

Rapid II First On-Ramp Report

The RSDO has completed the first on-ramp for Rapid II. The Orbital Sciences Corporation's Ministar spacecraft bus (used for the ACRIMSAT mission) has been added to the Rapid II contract. The buying team members were Bill Watson, Leif Grotos, Larry Christensen and Art Unger, supported by key consultants from Goddard's Applied Engineering and Technology Directorate and Flight Programs and Projects Directorate resources staff. The selection official was Dr. John Campbell. The process worked well, and Lessons Learned include plans for Rapid alumni to participate in future evaluations. Those who took part in the first on-ramp are likely recruits for our second on-ramp in September 2000.

By Bill Watson/Associate Chief of the RSDO

RSDO's New Web Site Enables E-commerce

The newly designed RSDO web site is up and running! Its innovative features (described in the January 2000 issue of the newsletter) allow us to conduct many aspects of RSDO business electronically. In particular, the upgraded security elements now inherent in the system ensure that all data transactions are safeguarded by encryption. We now routinely post Requests For Offers (RFOs) via our web site, and vendors can also submit proposals electronically.

In addition, users can access information on the recently added news ticker (found on the left-hand side of the home page) by pointing and clicking on the desired item. RSDO can easily and quickly update this scrolling banner to reflect current events, as needed.

But RSDO's e-commerce strategy does not end here. We envision the expansion of our web site to include additional capabilities. For example, in the future the RSDO may conduct proposal evaluations electronically. Evaluation team members in remote locations will be able to view and discuss files simultaneously, reaching consensus more quickly. Of course, all data transactions would continue to be secure, so that proprietary information would be safeguarded.

By Lena Braatz/BA&H

Awards and Honors

RSDO a Finalist for the "Business Solutions in the Public Interest Award"

On April 27, we received notification that the RSDO was selected as a finalist in the "Business Solutions in the Public Interest Award." Government Executive magazine and the Council for Excellence in Government are administering this annual award, in partnership with the Office of Federal Procurement Policy. This award recognizes teams and agency leaders who have implemented effective acquisition practices to achieve their agency's goals. The RSDO was nominated for the strides the Rapid Spacecraft Acquisition (RSA) program has made toward achieving NASA's mission. Using RSA, government agencies can acquire spacecraft at lower risk, in less time, and for a significant cost savings as compared to the traditional method of satellite bus acquisition.Selected as one of 14 finalists from a pool of over 120 applications, the RSDO is the only NASA organization to reach the final stage of the competition. On May 10, finalists presented brief descriptions of their respective programs before the selection committee. Winners will be featured in the August issue of Government Executive, and will be honored at a reception this September.

RSDO Contracting Officer Wins Award

Sharon Collignon, former RSDO Contracting Officer, was selected as the 1999 NASA MidRange/Commercial Person of the Year. Sharon won this award as a result of her outstanding work on the Rapid II procurement. After conducting extensive research, Sharon determined that commercial procedures were feasible for use in this procurement. She then developed the Rapid II procurement strategy, incorporating innovative features such as the on-ramp that allows periodic modification of existing contracts and the addition of core buses and options. Sharon's efforts have resulted in an improved spacecraft bus acquisition method that saves NASA and other government agencies time and money. Congratulations, Sharon—this award is well deserved!

Rapid II SEB Receives Commendation

NASA Headquarters recently presented members of the RSDO's Rapid II Source Evaluation Board (SEB) with an Acquisition Improvement Award. The award commends the SEB for "outstanding achievement in source selection activities and the furtherance of Acquisition Streamlining Initiatives." Rapid II SEB members receiving the award included Ron Miller, Sharon Collignon, Jack Ellis, Ken Dolan, Steve Aloezos, Leif Grotos, and Chuck Chidekel. GSFC Deputy Director, Bill Townsend, presented the award at a ceremony at Goddard on April 11, 2000.

Congratulations, team, for a job well done!